

to anyone. He says  
he feels like someone  
who keeps returning things  
to a store, the clerks  
all looking strangely at him  
because he can't explain  
what it is he wants  
or what he's lost.

He reminds her  
how the leaves turn colors  
and die  
in the city where they  
used to live.  
She puts that letter  
with the others.  
Makes the bed,  
makes herself up  
for whoever is coming.  
She thinks the vacuum he left  
is just fresh air.

10/28/70 Cleveland

-- Joel Deutsch

Allston, MA

### The Window: Nashville, Tennessee

Before the highways were hung overhead  
we drove through the fringes of the slum, on  
our way for a day in the city.

My father pointed to a shack attached  
to a grocery, where black boys stood  
noticing me through inches of conditioned air.  
He says,  
"That's where he died. See the shadow  
on the window."  
There was no shadow there for me,

until several Saturdays later  
my father reminded us to look for it.  
Mother told him that he sure repeated the  
same stories a lot.  
Then I saw it.  
The shadow of an old man  
who'd sat for thirty years next to the window.  
And who died months before he was noticed.

The shadow's explanation was then  
that getting his soul out of the room  
God had scorched the window.  
My brother suggested that it was like his  
brownie box camera. The sun had got so used  
to stopping where the old man stopped  
that the pane was like film. His reflection  
was a positive negative.  
Then my mother offered  
that the story'd been made to suit the window.  
My father looked at her.  
My brother went on with his box camera theory.  
And I stared, and stared  
at the film in my head  
that was to hold that image regardless.

### Live Wrestling

The Murfreesboro Mauler peels  
John Blank out of the ropes, where  
he threw him,  
and body slams him.  
They ride together on the mat  
like that for several minutes,  
flipping like fish, the Mauler  
grinding salt into John Blank's eyes.

They struggle to their feet  
like rapist and rapee, Blank blinking  
and blanching, the Mauler, mauling.  
When a huge man from the studio audience  
with sinking ships on his forearms  
pops a packet of ketchup in his mouth  
and leaps into the ring,  
appalling the Mauler and drawing applause.  
He goes for the villain

who steps aside neatly and plants a fist  
in the ostensible tourist's throat.  
The ketchup breaks open;  
the fans at home slap their knees  
and the announcer stumbles on the word hemorrhaging.  
The camera spins around, simulating chaos.  
And for a second we glimpse  
a policeman lighting his cigarette  
and a 10 year old boy dragging  
his bawling brother back from the bathroom.

-- Jim Hall

St. Petersburg, FL